

Cooking Safety This Holiday Season

The topic we want to highlight this week is Cooking Safety. Our firefighters have unfortunately had to respond to several cooking fires in just the past few weeks, all of these resulted in property damage to the home that will undoubtedly interrupt many of our resident's holiday plans. Thankfully there were no fatalities or serious injuries associated with these fires to report, but this is not always the case. We were able to identify a common element that each of these fires shared; a stovetop burner was left on with the stove unattended.

Here are some statistics that sadly show how big a problem this is and some cooking safety tips you should be aware of when cooking for not only this holiday season, but throughout the year to help prevent additional kitchen fires.

Cooking fires by the numbers (Based on 2012-2016 annual averages)

- Cooking equipment is the leading cause of home* fires and fire injuries, causing 48% of home fires that resulted in 21% of the home fire deaths and 45% of the injuries.
- Two-thirds (66%) of home cooking fires start with the ignition of food or other cooking materials.
- Clothing is the item first ignited in less than 1% of these fires, but clothing ignitions lead to 15% of the home cooking equipment fire deaths.
- Ranges or cooktops account for almost two-thirds (63%) of home cooking fire incidents.
- Unattended equipment is a factor in one-third (32%) of reported home cooking fires and half (45%) of the associated deaths.
- Frying dominates the cooking fire problem.
- Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.

What you should know about home cooking safety

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food



- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the kitchen while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

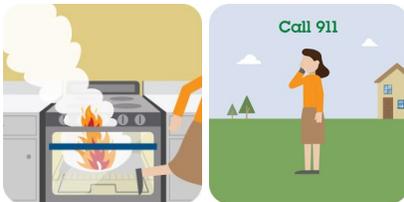


If you have a cooking fire

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number after you leave.
- If you try to fight the fire, be sure others are getting out and you have a clear way out.
- Keep a lid nearby when you're cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.



- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed, evacuate and call 911



Deep fryer Safety

Thanksgiving just wouldn't be Thanksgiving without the turkey. And deep-fried turkey has become a favorite Thanksgiving tradition in many households. But if used improperly, an overloaded fryer can easily tip over and set an entire house ablaze. The following are some helpful tips to backyard chefs who plan to deep-fry a turkey for the holidays

- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable materials.
- Never use turkey fryers in a garage or on a wooden deck.
- Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If you do not watch the fryer carefully, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.
- Never let children or pets near the fryer even if it is not in use. The oil inside the cooking pot can remain dangerously hot hours after use.
- To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer.
- Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when touching pot or lid handles. If possible, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from oil splatter.
- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water do not mix, and water causes oil to spill over causing a fire or even an explosion hazard.
- The National Turkey Federation (NTF) recommends thawing the turkey in the refrigerator approximately 24 hours for every five pounds in weight.
- Keep a fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire. If the fire is manageable, use your fire extinguisher. If the fire increases, immediately call 911 for the fire department for help.